CD/1256
31 March 1994

Original: ENGLISH

GROUP OF 21

Declaration on the question of Negative Security Assurances

1. The Group of 21 reiterates its conviction that the only completely effective security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons lie in a prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament, and a complete elimination of these weapons.

The present international situation has eroded the traditional arguments for the maintenance of nuclear arsenals and clearly calls for the nuclear-weapon States to engage on an effective process of nuclear disarmament. There is also a need to recognize the right of non-nuclear-weapon States not to be attacked or threatened with these weapons.

2. This position, shared by the overwhelming majority of non-nuclear-weapon States, is a long-standing one. It dominated the debates for a long time, during the negotiation of the non-proliferation Treaty, during its successive review conferences, during all the previous sessions of the Conference on Disarmament, and during hundreds of multilateral meetings, conferences and symposiums devoted to disarmament or security.

In particular, the 14 years during which functioned the Ad Hoc Committee on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons have always seen the reconfirmation of this position by the Group of 21.

Today, the existence of such a right to guarantees is also recognized by nuclear-weapon States. However, not all nuclear-weapon States accept the idea of implementing those guarantees in a multilaterally negotiated, legally binding, international instrument based on a common formula.

That explains why, though there is apparently no objection to the principle within the members of the Conference on Disarmament, its Ad Hoc Committee leads only into minor progress and is still far away from proposing a text of consensus.

3. Non-nuclear-weapon States that have engaged themselves not to acquire nuclear weapons should be covered by equal and unconditional guarantees, in a multilateral convention which might be based on the following principles:

(a) the nuclear-weapon States will engage to never use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States;

(b) non-nuclear-weapon States should have the right to guarantees, the contents of which will be negotiated within the Ad Hoc Committee;

(c) the convention should result from a negotiation between all members of the Conference on Disarmament and should be legally binding;

(d) the common formula enclosed in the convention should be clear, credible, without any ambiguity, and should respond to the concerns of all the parties, including those related to nuclear proliferation in all its aspects;

(e) the convention should include clear undertakings of nuclear-weapon States concerning a general and complete nuclear disarmament.

4. The Group of 21 considers that the conclusion of such a convention should be an important step towards achieving an effective regime of non-proliferation in all its aspects as well as nuclear disarmament.

It also takes the view that nuclear-weapon States should continue and carry forward the process of de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons.

Negative security assurances are a vital element and an important measure of this process.

5. The Group of 21 believes that an international legal instrument on negative security assurances and a CTBT, together with other nuclear arms limitation measures, are essential elements of an effective international regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects.

Accordingly, delegations of G21 States parties to the non-proliferation Treaty feel that substantive progress in the aforementioned areas, and the advancement of these objectives, will decisively influence the outcome of the 1995 Review Conference of the NPT.

These member States also believe that, as a first step, nuclear-weapon States should extend, in a legally binding form, the security assurances granted in some international instruments, that assure some non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, to all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the non-proliferation Treaty.

6. On the eve of the forthcoming Review Conference, which will decide on questions of vital importance for the future of the international legal regime of non-proliferation, the Group of 21 calls upon all members of the Conference on Disarmament to give a concrete expression of their political will, by taking measures outlined above, in response to the needs of the time.